



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF PUBLIC SAFETY & SECURITY



MASSACHUSETTS EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY

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**PRESIDENT OBAMA RESPONDS FAVORABLY TO GOVERNOR PATRICK'S
REQUEST FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE**

Hurricane Irene Aid Available for Individuals, Businesses & Communities

FRAMINGHAM, MA - Governor Deval Patrick's request letter to President Obama to declare a major disaster in Massachusetts was approved on Saturday September 3, 2011. This declaration makes assistance available to individuals, households, businesses as well as the communities of Franklin and Berkshire County impacted by the significant rainfall and subsequent flooding from Hurricane Irene.

"We are committed to doing everything we can to help our residents, businesses and communities recover from the devastating impacts of Hurricane Irene," said Governor Patrick. "I am pleased that our request to the President for a disaster declaration was granted so quickly. This will help bring the assistance people need to rebuild."

To demonstrate the need for the 'Individual Assistance Program' offered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Commonwealth, through the efforts of the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency, have presented a compelling picture of the human suffering as a result of this event. There is no 'monetary threshold' associated with the 'Individual Assistance Program' (IA) to meet, but a demonstration of the breath of the impact and number of individuals involved. The disaster request is based on the fact that the impacted areas are dealing with major flooding impacts to private property and businesses, many roads remain impassable and habitability of homes remains in question.

Local, state and federal officials continue to transition from response mode to recovery activities associated with Tropical Storm Irene. MEMA has coordinated with FEMA and local officials to gather damage information in other counties across the Commonwealth including conducting formal Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDA's) in many heavily impacted communities.

Under the IA Program, the Commonwealth has received the following programs: Individuals and Households Programs (IHP), Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Disaster Legal Services, Crisis Counseling; Hazard Mitigation statewide and Small Business Administration Disaster Loans, as this event poses an immediate health and safety threat to residents and businesses.

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With the Public Assistance program (PA), FEMA will provide reimbursement to local government, state agencies and various non-profit organizations for 75 percent of the total eligible of repair or replacement costs of public infrastructure, technical and advisory assistance, contracts and personnel overtime related to emergency protective measures and debris removal.

The Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is the state agency responsible for coordinating federal, state, local, voluntary and private resources during emergencies and disasters in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. MEMA provides leadership to: develop plans for effective response to all hazards, disasters or threats; train emergency personnel to protect the public; provide information to the citizenry; and assist individuals, families, businesses and communities to mitigate against, prepare for, and respond to and recover from emergencies, both natural and man made. For additional information about MEMA and Flooding Issues, go to www.mass.gov/mema. Also, follow MEMA updates on *Facebook* and *Twitter*.